

**Table 1**  
**Leading Causes of Death Among**  
**African Americans in North Carolina, 2008**

Rank	Cause of Death	Number of Deaths
1	Diseases of the heart	3,466
2	Cancer	3,459
3	Cerebrovascular disease	1,025
4	Diabetes mellitus	747
5	Kidney disease	560
6	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	497
7	Other unintentional injuries	373
8	Alzheimer's disease	346
9	Septicemia (blood poisoning)	341
10	Homicide	325
	All other causes (residual)	4,625
	<b>Total Deaths—All Causes</b>	<b>15,764</b>

## Mortality

Table 1 shows the 10 leading causes of death for African Americans in North Carolina in 2008. Consistent with the white population, heart disease and cancer are the top two causes of death. Homicide ranks considerably higher (10<sup>th</sup>) as a cause of death among African Americans than among whites (19<sup>th</sup>). Other causes that rank higher for African Americans than whites are diabetes, kidney disease, and HIV. Some causes that rank lower for African Americans than whites are pneumonia and influenza, suicide, and Parkinson's disease. Injuries are the leading cause of death for younger African Americans. **Unintentional injuries (motor vehicle and other) rank first among children up to 14 years old. Homicide ranks first and motor vehicle injuries rank second among 15–34 year-olds.**

Table 2 shows 2004–2008 age-adjusted death rates (deaths per 100,000 population) for major causes of death, comparing African Americans and whites. **The largest health disparities, in which the African-American death rate is at least twice that of whites, are in diabetes, kidney disease, HIV, and homicide.** The death rates for suicide and chronic lower respiratory diseases

**Table 2**  
**Age-Adjusted Death Rates\* for Major Causes of Death**  
**by Race/Ethnicity, North Carolina Residents, 2004–2008**

Cause of Death	African American	White
<b>Chronic Conditions</b>		
Heart disease	236.0	192.6
Cancer	224.0	185.2
Stroke	73.5	49.2
Diabetes	51.0	19.5
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	30.4	51.1
Kidney disease	36.5	14.8
Chronic liver disease	8.4	9.3
<b>Infectious Diseases</b>		
Pneumonia/influenza	19.2	20.2
Septicemia (blood poisoning)	22.3	12.3
HIV disease	16.5	1.2
<b>Injury and Violence</b>		
Motor vehicle injuries	18.0	18.1
Other unintentional injuries	21.8	30.9
Homicide	16.4	3.6
Suicide	5.0	14.4

\* Rates are age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population and are expressed as deaths per 100,000 population using underlying cause of death.

are much lower for African Americans than for whites.

## Cancer Incidence

Table 3 presents cancer incidence rates for African Americans and whites for the five-year period 2002–2006. African Americans in North Carolina had a higher rate of total new cancer cases than whites (age-adjusted rate of 497.9 versus 478.0 for whites).

**Table 3**  
**Age-Adjusted Rates\* for Cancer Incidence**  
**by Race/Ethnicity**  
**North Carolina Residents, 2002–2006**

Site:	African American	White
Female Breast	143.0	149.5
Cervical Cancer	9.8	7.2
Lung/Bronchus	69.9	76.9
Prostate	242.5	136.8
Colon/Rectum	57.5	46.9
Bladder	10.9	21.6
Total Cancer (All types)	497.9	478.0

\* Rates are age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population and are expressed as cases per 100,000 population.